

services, commodities and knowledge.

Based on this, social and economic changes have taken place that have led to the

improvement of the human

resources and the quality of life services available to the public and standards of living which

has been made in closing the gaps between rural

and urban areas, men and women, and

the labour requirements of the society.

Development Report of 1997. Also

and urban areas, men and women, in

the economic structures of the country.

es advancements achieved by Omani women

f FWCW. The main focus of the analytical

report within this report contains concentrated on four different areas:

- 1) General Trends to achieve equality between men and women in areas such as education, health and employment (from 1995 to present).
- 2) Financial and institutional measures adopted to realize equality between men and women and in bridging the gender gap.
- 3) Achievements which have been reached in implementing the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action as a result of integrating gender issues into the development plans and programmes.
- 4) Recommended operational measures which will enhance in the advancement of Omani women in light of globalization.

apter I

Challenges facing the Omani women in empowering them in participating in economic

and social life.

The traditional perception of women which narrows their role to the reproductive and

familial role which is an inherited perception

Lack of knowledge by women of their Sharia and legal rights

Insufficiency of support services for women such as day care centers, vocational training,

information on labour market requirement or on credit.

policies and mechanisms that have been adopted for the advancement of Omani women

Eradication of poverty among women through productive programmes

INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL MEASURES

Financial:

The methods that are presently used in distributing the General budget over the different sectors do not allow monitoring the general or specific expenditures for programmes for the advancement of women nor can they provide a percentage of expenditure , therefore, it is not possible to find a trend in expenditure proportion since 1995. However, it can be said that there is an increase in expenditure for programmes and projects for women through other indicators which demonstrate clear achievement in areas such as education, combating of illiteracy, public health reproductive health and cultural awareness..Presently the Ministry of National Education is working at classifying data by Gender to providing this information for allocation of general resources that are specific for the advancement of women.

Institutional Measures:

ations decisions and administrative directives that governs

Is defined as the 1

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

National objectives:

- 1. Increase the participation of women in the work force in general and women in particular in the labor market.
- 2. Ensure that women have equal opportunities for education and training, equal opportunity for equal wages and work benefits.
- 3. Providing assistance to women to undertake productive projects.
- 4. Monitoring the rights of the labor market.

In agriculture, the participation of women increased from 6.1 in 1993 to 11.4 in 1996.

In industry, from 20.9 to 26.4 and services sector, from 9 to 9.7 for the same years!

Obstacles:

1. The role that the family and some teachers and educational institutions play in forming a negative self perception. Therefore what is needed is to develop positive perception about women and their abilities to contribute to national development.
2. The preference given to men over women in some employment even if she is fully qualified. Also preference is given to the expatriates to Omani women due to differences in wages or benefits.
3. Most of the private sector institutions are concentrated in the Muscat area which is developed. Also, these institutions do not provide social services for women.
4. In the industrial sectors there are health services for both men and women.
- The insufficiency of occupational counselling whether in the General Education or at the University which hinders the Omani women the occupation which is appropriate for their qualifications. Many female secondary school graduates register in Colleges of Education or Medicine because such areas are considered more suitable for women to compete against men in the market of work.
- It is against the concept of complementarity between them and the best investment is in human resources.

The national inclination of women to work is limited to that of occupations such as

text of her family.

8. The responsibility of the women within
9. Many women prefer not to work after

Future Actions:

The Sultan is presently in the process of introducing modern programmes that introduce technology, new knowledge, new skills especially to develop the technical skills of the local population in the production sectors. Within its context there is now opportunities through:

1. Adopting an educational academic programme as well as applied skills.

that provides General Science Education

require links between the educational institutions and the economic sectors.

3. Adopting special programmes open to young girls, after the compulsory education stage.

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Future Actions:

- A. To eliminate the social obstacles and values that hinder women's employment and to assist women in their entry into the labour market.
- B. Adopt plans for employments of graduates in various sectors.
- C. Activate networks of communication and coordination between educational institutions and employment institutions.
- D. Establish specialized employment units centrally and in the provinces for women to appropriate employment opportunities.
- E. To activate NGOs so that they can promote awareness on employment for women and provide information to women of banks and similar institutions as well as other relevant government agencies.
- F. Facilitate access of women to soft loans and credits through appropriate mechanisms and establish specialized department for small business credit.
- G. Mobilize local resources as well as foreign capital to finance projects.
- H. Activate the role of women NGOs in encouraging the participation of women in the economy.
- I. Develop Centre for Technical and Vocational Training so that they provide training for young girls.

occupants. Most of the workers are between 20-35 years old and over 50% are female.

Women in the Private Sector

Women are working in private sector occupations that require applied technical skills as well as services. The Omani women are also involved in business.

Women Volunteers in the Social Sector

Women NGOs are monitored by the Department for Cultural Women NGOs in Social Affairs. There is always encouragement to establish women NGOs because mechanism that allows women to participate in decision making and to be involved in community work.

In 1998, there were 23 such women organizations and those located in the provinces considered main social institutions through which governmental service are delivered. Also through these organizations, women provide an indirect input into decision making processes. These organizations have focused on issues such as poverty reduction, women in the family

Possible Actions

Given the fact that most of the NGOs are located in the provinces, greater participation action should be taken to ensure that there are opportunities for more women to participate in the decision-making process at the level of community.

Training programs so that the women can take part in the training of women in technical and vocational areas so that they can make their decision in a more informed manner.

Ensure proper opportunities for women in the planning aspects of community projects and links to central structures.

participation.

4. Establishing volunteer groups to assist health

A Birth spacing programme was established which provides counselling and choice contraceptive methods with emphasis on the rôle of the man in birth spacing decisions.

5. A Programme to support mother and child care was establishment in 1987 and has been

five health care for women. Some communities are controlled by the Ministries of Oil and Health. Some communities are controlled by the Ministry of Oil and the Company for Oman Oil.

The private sector has undertaken a small role in providing health services under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.

All hospitals provide primary and preventive health care.

10. Health centers now provide 95% of the health needs of the country.

Indicators in the health sector:

There are more female graduates than male of the 14 centers of the Ministry of Health 187 women versus 145.

In 1997, 437 graduated from the nursing institute and women double the men and 320 women. Out of these, 20 of them to specialized 8 men and 12 women.

There are 2500 female volunteers in the health sector.

There is an expansion in the birth spacing programme in 1987 - 2001.

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

There was a national seminar held in Muscat in 1994 to examine the role of women in protecting the environment and it made many recommendations for inclusion in development plan including:

- increasing the opportunities in education and training in areas related to environmental protection
- increasing women's participation in decision-making related to environment
- establishing a Committee for Women representing different sectors under the supervision of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment, under the Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation.

Progress:

There are now 54 volunteer groups for environmental awareness in which the Omani women participate extensively.

In order to encourage women to implement environmentally-friendly projects, a number of women were given permission to establish institutions during the period 1995-1997 such as freezing and packaging fish, carpentry, production of plant pots and production of plastics.

Twenty-one women were trained on environmental skills.

Provide information on environment, the proper use of communities and products.

At the end of 1997, 1100 women participated in managerial and technical posts of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment during the period 1995-1998.

Obstacles:

The major obstacle is the absence of database and information on Women and their participation in environmental issues. It is difficult to provide information on representation of women in social services as it is difficult to measure the participation of women in the use of natural resources. Due to the absence of the data, it is also difficult to calculate indicators to measure the contribution of women in the field of environment especially those

WOMEN AND MEDIA:

Progress:

Some of the progress was reflected in documentary programmes about women showing their development and advancement and emphasis on the importance of political participation.

The

Radio programmes, weekly T.V. programmes for women available since 1995, pages in newspapers that highlight activities undertaken by Omani women. In addition, developmental drama in both T.V. and Radio to show the changing role of Women

Employment and the Media:

- Men and women have ensured rights to the same wages, benefits, and responsibilities since 1995.
- Also, higher level appointments have been made such as General Director of station and Chief of Personnel.
- In the media, the emphasis is given to highlighting on the role of women.
- All the election processes now encourage women to participate in the local National Shura Council. Oman is the only GCC country that has a woman in the Shura Council.
- Media and rural women and Bodwan: Media services focus on women in rural areas as in the remote areas.
- The media also tries to raise the awareness of these women and the community about four things:
 - a) the proper raising and socialization of children
 - b) to highlight the importance of the Shura Council
 - c) To give attention to the participation of women in development

GIRL CHILD

Objectives:

Promoting belief in the right of the child, based on all religions, Islamic and International and opposition against the girl child, the Sultanate of Oman has issued a national legislation which calls for elimination by Sultan decree no. 96/54. In October 1997, another decree was issued no. 97/71 to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was submitted to the National Committee for Childhood to be handled by the Minister of Social Affairs. The concerned. The role of this National Committee is to adopt comprehensive policies for their implementation and administrative monitoring.

Progress in the Situation of the Girl Child:

In order to formulate programmes, a database is established in order to provide profile of the girl-child. Also will be held by ONGOs, the Ministry of workshops to:

- Train trainers who will be responsible to implement the Convention on the Child
- Train media personnel
- Provide workshops for the senior officials ones including health, education, social affairs, Information and Foreign Affairs;
- Provide Workshops for scouts to make them aware about the Convention of the Child
- Convoc a conference among children in the Convention
- Develop a new Personal Status Law Project
- The rate of dropout of girls from school has decreased between 1979 and 1997 which indicates that more girls are continuing their studies and not marrying early

and in the general health of children in accordance to various indicators of "developmental homes of the rural children" and in the increase in the number of pre-school centers in the last ten years. This indicates the increase in the participation of women in pre-school education which indicates that women are encouraging their children to go to school, and women to be employed, as well as the increase in the number of pre-school centers in the various NGOs.

are mentioned, the following are mentioned:

Human Rights

Personal Status Law Sultan's Decree No. 32/97. It has six Chapters, 282 Articles that regulates family relations, marriage, divorce, custody and other related matters. It was based on Islamic Sharia. Out of the 282 articles, 127 regulate matters related to engagement, marriage, divorce and custody. These articles gave women privileges in addition to what the Sharia has stipulated.

1. The law gave the women the right to break an engagement to request a divorce.

gives the women the right to manage her dowry as she pleases.

law stipulates that the wife has the right to family name, to have total control over private wealth, and that the husband cannot cause harm both morally and materially.

cannot force her to live with another wife without her consent and she has the right to experience any kind of physical violence.

to demand a separate home.

to vote in 1994, and in 1997 all Omani women got the right to vote.

5. Oman Women in Muscat got the right to vote.

in the legal area will increase because in 1997 the first law was passed and women have the right to enrol in the

6. It is expected that the new College of Law and Shariah University.